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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

50X1-HUM

## INFORMATION REPORT

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1. The absurdity of the charges against the Soviet doctors was evident to everyone in educated circles. The doctors's arrest was considered a personal act of Stalin, who was considered at the time to be mentally as well as physically ill. The incident touched off a wave of anti-Semitism and also a wave of distrust of all doctors. The later release of the doctors was viewed as a righting of an old wrong, and it was received hopefully as an indication that the new regime would adopt saner policies.

Stalin's Death

2. The death of Stalin was unexpected and caused real grief, as in the case of a father who is a strict disciplinarian, but who nevertheless holds the controlling influence in a family. The large influx of people, estimated at two million, into Moscow following Stalin's death required a cordon around Moscow to control the movements of the crowds. Facilities in the city were inadequate to handle the great numbers of people and many deaths resulted from exposure.

Beriya's Arrest

3. No tears were shed over the arrest of Beriya. The result of the alleged Beriya plot was that Commander of the Moscow Military District Artemyev and Commandant of the City of Moscow Sinilov were removed.<sup>1</sup> The latter was charged with responsibility for the difficulties which caused the breakdown of facilities at the time of Stalin's death. Another result of the plot is that the powers of the MVD are now considerably reduced. The administration of jails, for example, has now been transferred to the Ministry of Justice.<sup>2</sup>

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Amnesty

4. The granting of an amnesty is now considered a deliberate action taken by Beriya to strengthen the police and to improve his chances in the power struggle. The release of criminal elements created a crime wave in Moscow, particularly in the suburbs. The extent of the purse-snatching and house-breaking made it dangerous to go out at night. The situation stabilized rapidly, however, and the majority of the criminal elements have again been jailed. The amnesty also freed a large number of people who had been jailed for absenteeism. Although the law is still on the books, no current arrests are being made for being late to work.

Malenkov

5. Malenkov's speech to the Supreme Soviet was viewed as his first independent statement and was well received as a hopeful sign of improvement. Public opinion of Malenkov as Stalin's heir is still not fully formed, however, and a feeling of uncertainty still prevails.

General Conditions

6. When compared with 1937-38, which are considered the best pre-war years, present conditions in the USSR are better or at least as good. Consumer distribution is still poor, and housing is still critical despite the new construction, because the construction cannot keep pace with the increased demand.

1. Comment. Col. Gen. P.A. Artemyev and Lt. Gen. K.R. Sinilov were released from their posts sometime in September 1952. 50X1-HUM
2. Comment.                      probably                      the Directorate of Labor Camps (GULAG) which had been under the old MVD and which is now subordinate to the Ministry of Justice. 50X1-HUM

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